Chapter XXV

Kids of the Internet Generation

A few years ago, one of us was at a neighbor’s house watching a member of our future workforce in action. She was about 14, sitting in front of her computer, talking on the phone with a couple of her friends through three-way calling, as they browsed a Web site together. Every few seconds, she would respond to one of the five instant messaging chats that she had open on her screen. I thought to myself, “This girl knows how to work in a virtual team.”

Technology Still Doesn’t Solve All Problems

A couple years later, we hired some new college graduates that had grown up in an environment similar to my neighbor’s. They were tech savvy and comfortable with the tools of virtual teams. We hired them into a global distributed team and assumed they would be right at home. What we didn’t realize at the time was that we had ourselves believing in one of the myths of virtual teams: technology solves all problems.

We found that the new hires were smart and very comfortable with technology. But they didn’t have the network of contacts that the experienced employees had established throughout their career. The technology was familiar to them,